

## Social Surgery

19 October 2017

Hosted by: Aberdeen Asset Management PLC, Bow Bells House, 1 Bread Street, London, EC4M 9HH

Event summary by Niels Footman, Copylab

### FIVE KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM FSF'S SOCIAL SURGERY

#### 1) Storytellers:

Moz Dee, co-founder of video marketing agency Contented, was in no doubt as to the single most important factor underpinning effective marketing. "Storytelling is the key reason we're top of the food chain," he said. "When man killed a mammoth, it wasn't sufficient to talk about the effectiveness of his club – he had to convey how it made him feel."

Dee urged his audience to stop viewing storytelling as somehow separate to other marketing activities. Instead, it has to be a central part of everything financial marketers do. Echoing this point, Harry Wake, VP EMEA of marketing agency SJR, said that "content" and "social" are in fact increasingly meaningless as distinct areas – they are all key parts of marketing activity.

#### 2) Be sure to ask, Why?

Volvo's video starring Jean Claude Van Damme, in which the Belgian action star performs the splits across two moving Volvo trucks, has unquestionably earned the epithet "viral", having gained more than 87 million views. Despite that roaring success, Dee said, Volvo's sales actually declined after the video came out.

Keeping in mind the usual provisos about correlation not equalling causation, Dee raised the point that if sales didn't benefit from such popularity, you need to ask what the point of the campaign was. And this is a broader lesson for any marketers: no matter how shiny and modish social content seems, it's of no use to marketers if they can't say why they're doing it – whether the answer be increased sales or conversions, or just greater public awareness.

#### 3) Be sure to ask, Who?

Equally important, said Dee, was ensuring that you know your audience. Against the backdrop of the farcical recent campaign video for Conservative Party candidate Greg Knight, Dee pointed out that although this video also went viral, it did so for (presumably) the precise opposite reasons to those Knight would have been aiming for.

#### 4) Aiming for the middle

Noting that bots account for some 60% of all online traffic – and that just 1% of 18-34 year olds said that a good ad would persuade them to trust a brand more – Wake said that brands need to fundamentally reassess how they communicate with customers. Indeed, rather than being advertisers, brands should be turning themselves into publishers.

And to have the maximum impact, Wake stressed that brands should be aiming for content that is neither too high-brow and academic, nor too superficial and throwaway – content that he called “middleweight”.

Middleweight content, Wake said, should be both high-frequency and high quality, not unlike you’d find at newspapers and magazines. Through this content, brands should be able to bring their purpose to life in a way that they can’t with ads. Special K, for instance, wants to embody the purpose of female empowerment, a message it can convey much more powerfully through timely, quality articles than through the blunt instrument of slogans or jingles.

Crucially, middleweight content is distributed across channels, and lets brands engage via influencers on a global scale. And in stark contrast to ads, it gives journalists content they can and will use. This level of communication can help drive purchase decisions, Wake said, provided it is regular and high-quality, and not structured like a conventional ad campaign.

## 5) What would GE do?

As a glaring success story of “brands as publishers”, Wake pointed to GE. Looking to position itself as “the world’s biggest startup”, GE has a content ecosystem, showing the entrepreneurial, high-tech and sometimes downright geeky elements to its work. The company has developed its own visual vocabulary, Wake said, and strict criteria for what content it will produce: if, for instance, they can’t figure out how to get a piece of content out quickly, they won’t do it at all. As a result of its publishing push, GE’s assorted sites now receive 3 million visits per month.

*Copylab is a creative copywriting and investment-writing agency. Creativity is our passion. And a forensic attention to detail is our vocation. In the lingo, we’re content people. Not ‘content’ as in we’re self-satisfied. But rather, if you need investment content (the noun), we’re the folk to ask.*

*Our services include fund reporting and copywriting for advertising campaigns, tone-of-voice review, sales aids, white papers, thought-leadership pieces, articles, newsletters and all forms of corporate communications. We also provide support for social-media campaigns, and training and coaching for copywriters. Essentially, we can write and edit across the investment spectrum to create engaging editorial content for all audiences – from retail to institutional, from beginner to industry expert.*

*Our staff are investment professionals and expert editors. We specialise in writing for financial-services clients, particularly asset managers and pension providers, but we also work for non-financial clients when the opportunities arise. We’re based in Glasgow, Edinburgh and London.*

### **The Financial Services Forum**

[www.thefsforum.co.uk](http://www.thefsforum.co.uk)

0207 449 9000

### **Copylab**

[www.copylab.co.uk](http://www.copylab.co.uk)

0131 247 6781

For additional events, discussions, reports, white papers and presentations, please visit The Forum’s Knowledge Centre: <https://www.thefsforum.co.uk/knowledge-centre/>